

Yancey County Year in Review 2012

Yancey County Economic Development Commission

Numerous projects and more than \$250 million in infrastructure has county prepared for the future.

Happy New Year! From all of us involved with Yancey County's economic development. We look back with a sense of pride regarding collective accomplishments that will move our rural county in positive directions.

We have seen major strides forward in diverse occupational sectors including recreation, tourism, infrastructure, manufacturing and more. We look forward to the coming year with optimism as we strive to make our county the place we all want to live and work.

Economic development cannot be accomplished by one person or one organization but is collaboration between Yancey County government, Town of Burnsville, Yancey County Economic Development Commission, Yancey County Schools, Mayland Community College, Yancey County Health Department, Yancey Chamber of Commerce and many other local groups and organizations working together.

Opportunity comes in all flavors as we work together to enhance diversified, sustainable economic development in our community. Yancey County is prepared to discuss and explore all opportunities that can be pursued in the coming year. Together we can make a difference!

While we have tried to list most, we apologize for those not listed.

Infrastructure Projects

Planning and building for the future, Yancey County has numerous projects completed and ongoing, with over \$250 million being invested presently in infrastructure and projects as follows:

N.C. Department of Transportation's completion and dedication of Hwy 19 four-lane from I-26 to Jacks Creek was a historic day, not only for Yancey



County but the region. Phase I construction began Sept. 2008 and completed 2012. Included in this project is a park-n-ride lot located at Possum Trot Road for commuters.



Phase II of Hwy. 19 construction from Jacks Creek to Micaville began July 2011 and is ongoing. Included in this project will be a walking path from Mountain Heritage High School to West Main Street and sidewalks through Burnsville to East

Yancey Middle School. Enhancements with green medians and landscaping through Burnsville will improve the visual aesthetics. Mt. Mitchell Scenic Drive ByWay from I-26 to Mt. Mitchell allows additional funding for beautification along this roadway, and means no additional commercial billboards. A local company, Young-McQueen Grading Company, is contractor on road construction in Yancey County.

Right-of-way acquisition for future Hwy 19 four-lane road from Micaville to Spruce Pine is underway. Construction on Phase III should begin in the near future.

The Broadband Project being built by Country Cablevision, a local company, will provide high speed, fiber optic, connectivity to 95% of homes and businesses in Yancey County. With the head-end building constructed, hookups will begin as soon as equipment is installed. This connectivity project is one of the most important infrastructure projects in decades and puts Yancey at the forefront for creating jobs.

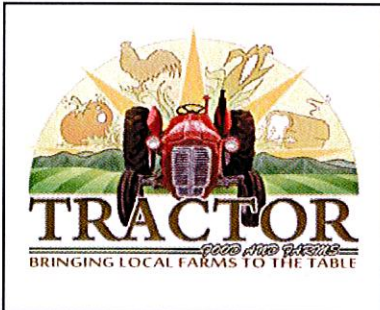




East Yancey Sewer District, a joint project between Yancey County and Town of Burnsville, is a new sewer system being constructed to serve the Micaville area to Hickory Springs and east Burnsville. The County has taken the lead role in building and liability of sewer project. This project has been in planning stages since the 1990s

because of failing septic systems and needs of local industry and school.

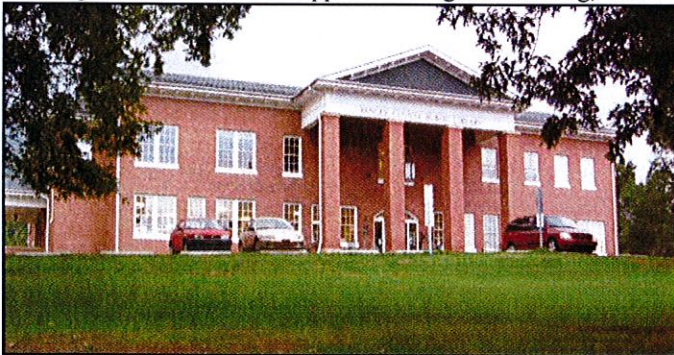
TRACTOR – Toe River Aggregation Center Training Organization Regional is a regional partnership between Yancey and Mitchell counties Extension Service Agencies. Initiated with support from Yancey County government and Extension, the organization is working with local farmers, businesses and interested parties to develop a regional aggregation center to bring local farmers together with markets for selling their produce. Support for this project from County, Town, EDC, Yancey Foundation and numerous others have made it a reality. GAP certification through Mayland Community College for farmers is ongoing. Support from everyone has been overwhelming and interest from the agriculture community is incredible!



Yancey County Government

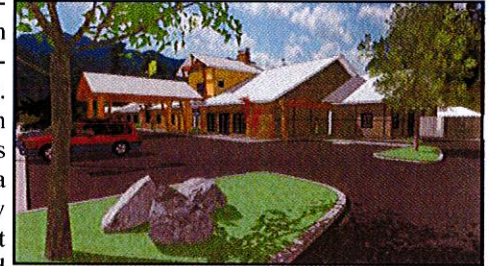
Yancey County Government has undertaken numerous other projects such as:

*After more than 10 years of hard work by volunteers and the Steering Committee, and support from grant funding, local



businesses and individuals, completion of **Yancey County Public Library** was made possible by Yancey County Commissioners securing a bond through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Now residents and visitors can enjoy a state-of-the-art library, as well as technology center with tele-conference capabilities by way of a generous grant from the State Employees Credit Union Foundation.

*A new **Yancey County Senior Center** has for years been a dream for many of our senior residents. The Committee on Aging and Senior Center staff, together with volunteers and community fundraising has been diligently working on funding. Together with Commissioners obtaining a Community Development Block Grant and working with the Yancey County Committee on Aging to assist them in obtaining a USDA loan. The center will also house the Adult Day Care Center. Construction of the new facility begins soon. The center provides recreational and community classes and programs for seniors, along with congregate meals as well as distribution through Meals on Wheels.



*In 2009, Yancey County Commissioners purchased the balance of land necessary to develop the **Cane River Recreation Park**. In 2010, they formed a partnership with Graham Children's Health Services, Healthy Yancey and others to begin work on the park. Through grants, donations, and volunteer labor, completion of property for a comprehensive community recreation area providing athletic fields, playgrounds, walking trails, canoe and river individual athletic activities is becoming a reality.

*For years, **Yancey County's Department of Social Services** offices were in three locations, creating inefficiency of operations and services.



Yancey County government renovated the old county-owned Yancey Hospital space for a consolidated location, which will be a cost savings for our citizens and improve services to residents.

*When the **License Plate Agency** office closed, Yancey County Commissioners made a commitment to fund and reopen an office. Working closely with DMV of the N.C. Department of Transportation, personnel were trained and a modern, convenient tag office was reopened to serve the people of Yancey County.



Town of Burnsville



The Town of Burnsville is actively involved with several projects:

*With **US Hwy 19 road construction** through Burnsville and necessity of relocating utility lines, the town has upgraded and expanded utility lines wherever possible.

*Planning for the future, a **Capital Improvement Plan** (water/sewer master plan) is underway.

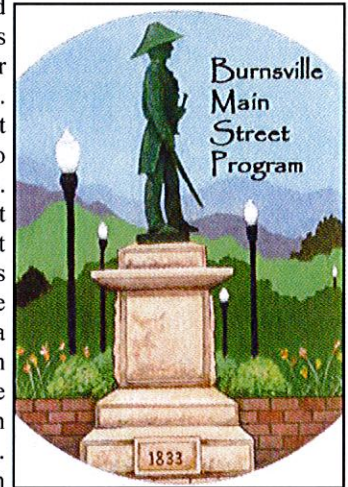
***New water lines** will be constructed from Burnsville to Mica-ville School with a Golden Leaf grant. The town is working jointly with N.C. Dept. of Transportation on installation of the water lines as the new road is built to Micaville.

***Inflow and Infiltration Project (I&I)** is currently underway to replace/repair old failing sewer lines in town.

***Sidewalk Projects** are underway to repair/upgrade sidewalks, curbs and gutters around Town Square. In addition, a new sidewalk will be built from TD Bank on West Main Street to Cherry Lane, connecting to sidewalks on Hwy. 19. These new sidewalks will make Burnsville a more pedestrian friendly, walkable community. This project made possible with NC Department of Transportation grant.

*Town Council is in process of re-codifying the zoning regulations. Also, they appointed a **Planning & Zoning Board**, which is exploring and recommending standards for signs and design guidelines to make Burnsville more attractive and welcoming to potential business and industry. N.C. Department of Commerce and their Community Assistance staff, plus design assistance from the N.C. Rural Center completed a comprehensive evaluation for the Town.

*Community volunteers have actively taken part with **Burnsville NC Step Program** and **Burnsville Main Street** and worked jointly on proposed projects to improve business and enhance opportunities for Burnsville's Main Street area. The Burnsville Development Group (BDG) was formed to oversee and facilitate projects. The volunteer group that participates as the Main Street Committee in Burnsville has initiated projects to enhance the designated Main Street area over past four years. Each major project won statewide awards and recognition in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012. This recognition has resulted in additional revenue for Yancey County businesses through additional visitor expenditures.



*Working jointly with Yancey County Economic Development Commission and BDG, Town Council has submitted grant application for the **Built Assets Program** with SOG, Rural Center and PSI. This program will provide guidance on private/public partnerships and financing for downtown revitalization and support of local businesses.

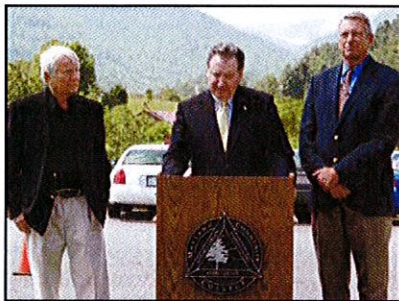
Schools and Education

Schools and education are an important part of Yancey County life and its future.



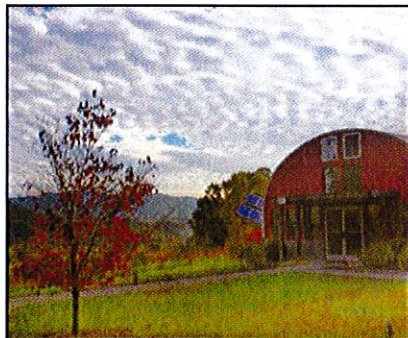
Mayland Community College has taken a lead role in training and retraining of workforce.

*Another historic day was the announcement of construction of the **Anspach Advanced Manufacturing School** through generous donation by Dr. and Mrs. Bill Anspach. This new 12,000-sq. ft. facility will be built on the Yancey Campus and house an Applied Engineering Program. Classes will be offered in advanced machining technologies, computer numerical controls (CNC), robotics, automation, mechatronics, design welding and other skills



necessary to meet the needs of new and existing industry. This training will allow local employees to earn a better wage, plus will assist local industry and be an incentive for attracting new industry with qualified workforce.

*Mayland Community College has formed a partnership with EnergyXchange to introduce the future home of **Estatote Regional Center for Science and Crafts**, combining the Blue

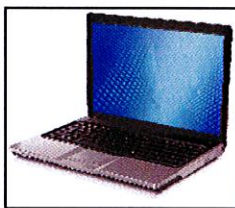


Ridge Star Park and Observatory and the Gardens of Mayland with the craft artist community already established at EnergyXchange. Synergy between the three entities will create a destination for local and regional visitors. The Observatory will house

a 34-inch telescope (largest in NC) and will be located in a dark sky area.

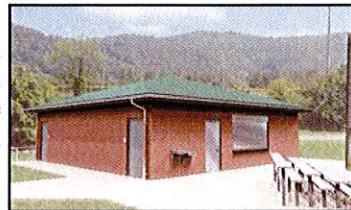
Yancey County Board of Education has several initiatives to improve schools and learning opportunities:

***Mountain Heritage High School 1:1 program** made possible through community assistance funding from Golden Leaf provides a computer for every child, and classrooms will receive technology upgrades.



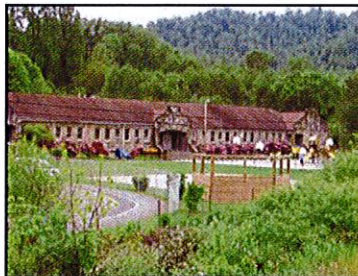
***Mountain Heritage High School – 13/New Schools Project** (NCNSP) will partner with Yancey County Schools to implement NCNSP Design Principles and Early College High School (ECHS) Strategies serving high needs students.

*A new facility, a **Softball Field House Complex**, on the Mountain Heritage High School campus will provide upgrades to playing fields and outbuildings at the school.



*The most recent dedication ceremony held at Cane River and East Yancey Middle Schools was a celebration of newly constructed school-based **Student Health Centers**. These new facility spaces will modernize and double the space of existing health center. This was joint project between YCS and Yancey County Health Department with support from county government.

***Bald Creek Elementary** has made a concerted effort to revitalize their playground and create an outdoor learning environment. These improvements with grant funding and volunteer labor include a river walk, school garden, greenhouse and a pavilion.



*Even though Yancey County has some of oldest school facilities, the YCS with cooperation of county government continues to **maintain these community school buildings** with renovation projects planned each year.

***Yancey County's public schools continue to be one of the top systems academically in North Carolina.**

Grades 3-8 have seen steady increases in both reading and math scores over the last four years, capping out with 84% of students reading on grade level in 2011-2012 and 94% proficient in math.



Industry/Business Assistance

Yancey County Economic Development Commission has been involved with County, Town and numerous groups and individual business owners on many projects:

***Working to support existing industry** has been a major focus. We are fortunate to have three major industries in our community offering employment for our citizens.



Glen Raven Mills has been a proud employer in Yancey County for 65 years in 2013 and currently employ just over 200 associates. Due to a comprehensive recycling program, Glen Raven is totally landfill free as of November 2011. They invested in excess of \$3.5

million this past year on new equipment. The company as a whole was recognized recently as North Carolina's Employer of the Year!

Altec Industries since the beginning of 2011 has added 41% to its work force and continues to hire. In 2012, the company made a significant investment in several new pieces of advanced state-of-the-art fabrication equipment that will allow them to continue to increase plant capacity and add more jobs.



Hickory Springs Manufacturing Company is one of the nation's largest integrate solutions companies and international supplier of components to the furniture industry. They recently announced relocating their inner-springs manufacturing operations from Michigan to the company's Micaville plant creating 25 jobs. Once sewer service is available, this provides additional future



opportunities for the company.

*Yancey County earned the **Certified Entrepreneurial Community (CEC)** designation from AdvantageWest in December 2011. The CEC status is achieved by a community with an

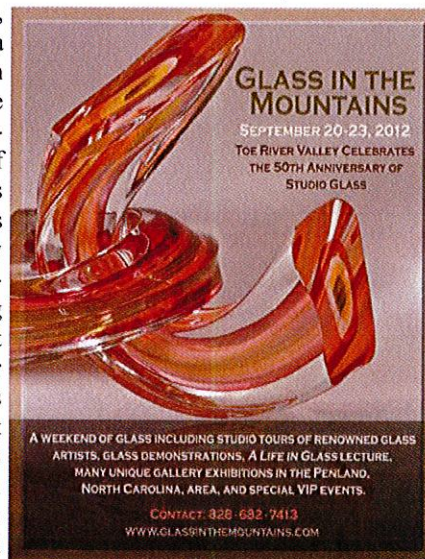


exceptional and unwavering commitment to being a place of economic opportunity for entrepreneurs.

***Preliminary site evaluation** of vacant properties for prospective industrial sites is underway. It is critical that infrastructure is available that includes water, sewer and natural gas to site.

*Since NC has seen an increase in demand for potential film projects, the EDC has recently completed a **Yancey County film update** for the NC Film Commission. It is critical that we have current photos on file for potential film scouts.

***Glass in the Mountains** celebrated the 50th year of studio glass movement, which included a weekend celebration of craft glass in the two counties including studio tours of renowned glass artists, glass demonstrations, many unique gallery exhibitions, culminating with sold out event at the Town Center attended by visitors from many states. It recognized the 58 glass artists living in the Toe River Valley (Yancey and Mitchell). This was a collaborative event with TRAC, Penland School, glass artists, Yancey and Mitchell EDCs and Chambers and numerous volunteers.



*Through support of **Burnsville Development Group**, new marketing materials and presentation folders have been completed. These materials are adaptable for use by County, Town, EDC, and Chamber and provides us with professional materials for marketing.

*A new website has been developed for Yancey County Economic Development Commission.

Respectfully submitted by:

Wanda Proffitt, Director
Yancey County Economic Development Commission